UNITED NATIONS

World Chronicle

PROGRAMME: No. 613, recorded 14 December 1995

GUEST: **Ahmad FAWZI**
Spokesman for United Nations Secretary-General
Boutros Boutros-Ghali

MODERATOR: Michael Littlejohns

1995: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Ahmad FAWZI, Spokesman for United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, discusses events and issues faced by the world organization in 1995. Its achievements in the fields of peace-keeping and humanitarian assistance, as well as its reform efforts, are being overlooked by its critics.

WORLD CHRONICLE is produced by the Media Division, Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, U.S.A.

Duration:	28:03
Executive Producer:	Kamil Taha
Director:	Livingston Hinckley
Production Assistant:	Ellen McGuffie

Best copy available

ANNOUNCER: From United Nations Headquarters in New York, this is **World Chronicle**, an unedited interview programme about major global issues. Here now to introduce our guest is the host of today's **World Chronicle**.

LITTLEJOHNS: I'm Michael Littlejohns, and this is a special edition of **World Chronicle**.

In 1995, the United Nations celebrated its fiftieth anniversary with the largest gathering of heads of State and Government in history. It was an occasion to assess the achievements and shortcomings of the world organization over the last five decades and to chart a course for the next century.

Our guest today is well qualified to reflect on the performance of the United Nations in 1995. He is Ahmad Fawzi, Spokesman for United Nations Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali. Before talking with Mr. Fawzi, let's look at a 15-minute year-end summary of major 1995 events as seen from a United Nations perspective.

NARRATION: They came from the four corners of the planet – kings, presidents, and prime ministers. Representatives of 185 countries, they met at United Nations Headquarters in New York for the largest gathering of world leaders in history. And with a little tactful arranging, a snapshot of power on our planet as the twentieth century draws to a close: a portrait of the countries who make up the United Nations as it celebrates its fiftieth anniversary, and who must chart its course for the next 50.

Most of the challenges leaders and ordinary people face today are not new. They were familiar to those who gathered 50 years ago in San Francisco to agree on the Charter of the United Nations. US President Harry Truman spoke for them all.

HARRY TRUMAN: "But these differences were all forgotten in one unshakeable unity of determination: to find a way to end war."

NARRATION: Five decades later, the fear and the memory of global war have receded, although 40,000 nuclear warheads remain in military stockpiles. But bitter regional conflicts rage: in Central Asia, in Africa, in the Balkans. In the former Yugoslavia, international military action, together with negotiations, have resulted in a peace agreement and a new multinational

peace-keeping force. The United Nations will continue with major humanitarian tasks in the Balkans. But the intervention of the Blue Helmets – here and elsewhere – has become increasingly complicated. Some 90 peace-keepers died serving the UN in 1995. UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

BOUTROS BOUTROS-GHALI: "The United Nations peace efforts have become more expensive, more complex, more dangerous."

NARRATION: Despite the well-publicized difficulties, there were significant advances for peace-keepers during the year. In Haiti, a United States-led mission, authorized by the Security Council, handed over to a UN operation. A new police force is being trained with United Nations help. The hope is that, with international assistance, the Caribbean State can consolidate its move towards a stable democratic future. In Angola, a decade of civil war began to give way to reconstruction and reconciliation with the help of UN peace-keepers. With 16 current operations now underway, and about 60,000 Blue Helmets from 84 countries in the field, the need to make such operations effective instruments of peace for the next 50 years was one of the themes at the fiftieth celebration. Norway's Prime Minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland.

GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND: "We must improve our peace-keeping and conflict prevention capacity to save more lives and to save expenses."

NARRATION: The founders of the UN made one of their first tasks the setting up of specialized agencies to deal with a tide of post-World War II refugees. Half a century later, although conflicts now are largely civil and ethnic, the problem has grown. From former Yugoslavia to Central Asia, from Sudan to Rwanda, more people have been displaced or are refugees than at any time in history. Today, some 50 million men, women and children have fled their homes – an astonishing one in every 105 persons on our planet.

REFUGEE WOMAN: "I shut the door of my house and left everything behind. I only brought some beans for the children, but we have eaten them all."

NARRATION: Land mines, another deadly legacy of today's wars, were the subject of United Nations conferences in 1995. Diplomats discussed taming this silent menace. Some Governments did agree to ban their export, but only limited progress was made towards prohibiting the use, manufacture and stockpiling of land mines. In many war zones, UN and private groups are funding clean-up efforts. Some 110 million land mines litter nearly 70 countries. Mines cost only a handful of dollars to make, but as much as a thousand to remove. Exchanging their weapons for metal detectors, these Afghanis have learnt the delicate and dangerous art of clearing the explosive devices. But more and more mines will lie in wait, for years, decades even, for an unwary footfall or a playful child.

A theme raised in the early days of the UN is still high on the international agenda today. Eleanor Roosevelt speaking in 1948.

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT: "This Universal Declaration of Human Rights may well become the international Magna Carta of all men everywhere."

NARRATION: These principles found a new expression in 1995. A war crimes tribunal, established by the Security Council, held its first meetings in the Hague in the Netherlands, its task to try those accused of genocide and atrocities in the former Yugoslavia. And in Rwanda, a similar body began investigating the genocide there. Tens of thousands of suspects crowd dilapidated prisons. The UN is leading the effort to reconstruct the country's judicial system.

San Francisco hosted a commemoration of the conference that agreed in 1945 on the historic UN Charter.

BOUTROS BOUTROS-GHALI: "It is the foundation stone of international relations. For five decades the United Nations has permitted nations to come together to deal with challenges that no single nation can resolve."

NARRATION: The event was held in the same opera house where the original signing ceremony had taken place. The Charter written then lays down, among other things, the equality of men and women. It was a far-

sighted declaration, one that finds widespread resonance today. Eloquent testimony to this was provided in Beijing in 1995. Here, Government representatives and private groups gathered for the Fourth UN Conference on Women. Pakistan's Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto.

BENAZIR BHUTTO: "This is truly a historic occasion. Some 40,000 women have assembled here to demand their rights, to secure a better future for their daughters, to put an end to the prejudices which still deny so many of us our rightful place in society."

NARRATION: Although emphasis differed according to the cultural and religious perspective of participants, on one crucial point few disagree. Women, most particularly in developing countries, shoulder much of society's responsibilities but do not equally share in the benefits. Enabling women to take an equal place is essential for the advancement of communities everywhere.

It was a theme warmly supported at the forum of citizen groups – non-governmental organizations – that held a parallel conference in Beijing, a reminder of a phenomenon the founders of the UN may not have anticipated – the growing influence of non-governmental initiatives in all aspects of the modern world.

At the UN's Geneva offices, international artists exhibited their interpretation of themes for the next 50 years. No doubt some of the works might have raised the eyebrows of the UN's founding fathers. It was one event among thousands that took place across the world, in communities large and small, as people celebrated the Organization's half century.

From the first UN General Assembly in London in 1946, a call for action that rings across the years, voiced by then-British Prime Minister Clement Atlee.

CLEMENT ATLEE: "Without social justice and security there's no real foundation for peace. But it is among the socially disinherited and those who have nothing to lose that the gangster and the aggressor recruit their supporters."

NARRATION: An appeal as pertinent today as it was then.

The need to address the economic and social problems of a world population that has nearly tripled in 50 years: This was the theme of the World Summit for Social Development that brought 118 heads of State and Government to Copenhagen in 1995. The Social Summit concluded that economic growth must not be at the expense of the poor and the marginalized, and development must better the whole human condition, not just produce impressive economic statistics. Guatemala's President, Ramiro Carpio.

RAMIRO CARPIO: "Let us try to find a lasting solution to one of the most dangerous contradictions of the world at the end of this millennium: a rich planet with inhabitants who, in their majority, are very poor."

NARRATION: It is precisely the worldwide effort to raise standards of life that continues to be the main task of the United Nations network of agencies. In Rwanda, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization distributed seeds and tools to help the population get their farms productive again. In Pakistan, the UN Drug Control Programme helped the frontier corps of Baluchistan stop drug traffickers slipping across the border from Afghanistan.

Pope John Paul II visited the United Nations in 1995. He underlined the need for a world economic system that meets the needs of all.

POPE JOHN PAUL II: "The international economic scene needs an ethic of solidarity if participation, economic growth and a just distribution of goods are to characterize the future of humanity."

NARRATION: While many issues confronting the world today were envisaged by the founders of the UN, some were not. Delegates in San Francisco did not foresee that one of the most pressing global concerns 50 years later would be the environment. Today there are more than 5,000 UN system development projects helping 175 countries. They are chosen to ensure respect for the environment.

To a background of clashes between European and Canadian boats in the North Atlantic, an important global environmental issue was successfully addressed in 1995. A UN meeting concluded a legal agreement on settling disputes and conserving fish stocks.

In Peru, reckless clearing of the Amazon jungle is destroying both fishing and soil fertility. But it doesn't have to be this way. Small farmers for generations have harvested the forest for medicinal plants and sustainable crops rather than burn it down. They are passing on these traditional skills to new migrants, helped by a UN system Global Environment Facility. And in Patagonia, at the southern tip of South America, the same fund is helping scientists protect endangered whale species and 3,000 kilometres of coastline.

Many concerns that preoccupied the war-weary crowds who welcomed the delegates to the first UN General Assembly continue to engage us. And as the world rushes towards the twenty-first century, new issues are making the headlines. Problems old and new, all these were on the minds of the national leaders who came to New York for the fiftieth anniversary.

But the session also faced an immediate and practical problem – the worst financial crisis in the Organization's history.

BOUTROS BOUTROS-GHALI: "The UN has not been given the resources required to accomplish the task imposed."

NARRATION: The session endorsed the role of a reformed United Nations to face its second 50 years. But Ireland's President Mary Robinson issued a warning.

MARY ROBINSON: "If we don't infuse the United Nations and the family of organizations which has grown around it with a new sense of purpose and a new sense of direction, a genuine global ethic, then I fear that the praise we give to the UN from this rostrum over these days will come in time to be read as its epitaph."

NARRATION: 1995 – a year of reflection for the United Nations. Ahead, the task of adapting itself to the demands of an increasingly complex, interdependent and populous planet.

LITTLEJOHNS: This is a special edition of **World Chronicle**. Our guest is Ahmad Fawzi, Spokesman for the United Nations Secretary-General. Mr. Fawzi, I gather that you were both the Spokesman and the narrator of the programme that we've just watched. The meeting of the Commemorative Session of the General Assembly in October, attended by the largest gathering of heads of State and Government in history, as we observed in the introduction – more than 140, I think – was not marked exactly by euphoria. In fact, there was a lot of talk about the need for United Nations reform. *The New York Times* had a big headline about the need to reinvent the United Nations. And we've heard very little since that momentous period, the three days of the Commemorative Session, but talk about reform. How far is reform advanced?

FAWZI: Well, first of all, thank you very much for having me on the programme, Michael, it's a pleasure to be here. I've been with the United Nations for three years now, and this is my first appearance on **World Chronicle**, which in itself has become something of an institution under your stewardship.

LITTLEJOHNS: We're pleased to have you.

FAWZI: Indeed, the Commemorative Session was a momentous event. The call for reform came from many world leaders, that is quite true. As the Secretary-General always says, reform is an ongoing process, and here at the United Nations these days it's like mending a car that is travelling at a speed of 100 kilometres an hour. We have to continue doing the work that we're doing while we're undergoing reform. It isn't as if we're going to stop, fix, and then carry on. You asked me what reform has been undertaken. A lot of reform has been undertaken since Boutros-Ghali came into office. He has cut significantly some of the higher posts when he came in. He has instructed his Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, Joseph Connor, to undergo a process of reform throughout all of the departments of the Organization in order to achieve a meaner – I beg your pardon – a leaner Organization –

LITTLEJOHNS: Leaner and meaner, probably.

FAWZI: Leaner and hopefully meaner. And also to cut costs wherever we can. But as I said, it's an ongoing process.

LITTLEJOHNS: It seems that, in the United States in particular, there's a considerable falling-off of support among the public for the United Nations. Is this a matter of concern to the Secretary-General? What's he doing about it? To give you an example, a

place I go to in the country has a local paper that conducts polls from – every week, in fact. And the latest poll found that 74 per cent of those responding felt the United States should withdraw from the UN. Now, this is quite alarming.

FAWZI: Well, that surprises me that you should say so, because only last week the United Nations Association of America announced a poll that it had conducted which showed that, in fact, support within the United States had increased for the United Nations. I think the figure was 54 per cent of those polled thought that the United Nations was doing a good job. And also a significantly increased number thought that the United States should work within the United Nations Organization. So I think that this is an exaggerated perception of the support that the United Nations has or doesn't have within the United States. Public opinion supports the United Nations, public opinion in the United States and certainly around the world. There are certain tendencies within Congress that do not support the United Nations, and I think that we can turn those round with a process of information and education that is necessary to understand the goals of the United Nations and how it functions.

LITTLEJOHNS: The United Nations has spent almost the entire year grappling with the most acute financial crisis in its history. What's the latest state of play there?

FAWZI: Well, indeed, the United Nations is going through the most severe financial crisis in its history. We are owed – we, the Organization, that is – is owed $2.6 billion from Member States who do not pay their dues. And it's really quite simple: Pay your dues, and the UN will be able to do the work that its founding fathers wanted it to do. At the moment the $2.6 billion is broken down into $2 billion for peace-keeping operations and the remainder for the regular budget. The regular budget is supposed to be paid up by the first month of the year. Until today not all Member States have paid their dues, some 70 or 80 have paid. So it's quite disgraceful that the Member States of this Organization, who demand so much from the Organization, aren't giving it the resources to carry out the job they want it to do.

LITTLEJOHNS: Is the United Nations in serious danger of becoming insolvent?

FAWZI: Well, it's a very strange situation that we're in, because we are at a stage where we're bankrupt. However, the United Nations cannot borrow money. We are studying various means to try and do something about it, but we are constantly dipping in from one budget into another in order, say, to pay salaries. We would dip into a peace-keeping operations budget that has a little more money for the time being in order to pay the salaries of the civil servants around the world. But the only solution, really, at the end of the day, is in the hands of the Member States.

LITTLEJOHNS: Coming back to reform, one of the reforms which has been called for is in the Security Council, expansion of the Security Council, more permanent members. The United States would like to see Germany and Japan become permanent members. There's some resistance from other States who say, "If Germany and Japan, what about us?" India, for example, would like to become a permanent member; possibly Nigeria, possibly South Africa, Brazil, Argentina -- a number of countries have been mentioned. Do you think there's any likelihood that this problem is going to be resolved in the foreseeable future?

FAWZI: No. Well, "foreseeable" is very flexible. But I don't think it's going to be resolved in a year or two, it's going to take very long debates within the General Assembly. As you know, in order to change the membership of the Council, you need to change the Charter. It is the view of the Secretary-General that the membership of the Security Council must reflect realities of the world today, and certainly countries like Japan and Germany, economic successes, political successes, must have a place in the decision-making process of this organization. But it is not up to the Secretary-General or the Secretariat, as you know, it's up to the General Assembly to make that decision. And certainly there should be equitable representation of all the forces and all the continents.

LITTLEJOHNS: Looking back over the past year, Mr. Fawzi, what would you identify as some of the really outstanding achievements of the Organization?

FAWZI: Well, there have been in 1995 some dramatic moments in UN peace-keeping, as you know. Let me talk about some of the operations that haven't received much attention. Mozambique, for example, is a success story for the United Nations, where the UN helped the staging of democratic elections at the end of 1994, and then they were organized with the assistance and the observation of the United Nations. And this process is now leading -- has led to the establishment of a democratic Government in Mozambique, and the situation there has improved immensely. They are removing the land mines, which is an immense problem, as you know, with the help of a lot of Member States. The UN operation in El Salvador came to a successful conclusion in April of this year. The transition from the multinational force to the United Nations force in Haiti came about successfully this year. So there are three examples of the United Nations doing good work. Cambodia was a success story. It ended last year, as you know, but I'm cheating a little bit in mentioning it this year. Of course, Bosnia-Herzegovina was a problem, and Croatia was a problem for the United Nations, and for the Member States this year. I can't not mention it.

LITTLEJOHNS: Some people go so far as to say a disaster for the United Nations.

FAWZI: Well, you see, I, of course, will disagree with that, as you would predict, but I think that we must look at it from an objective point of view. The United Nations has

done a lot of good work in the former Yugoslavia. They have been able to sustain and feed refugees – we're talking about up to 3 million refugees and displaced people. They have been able, our forces there – up to 47,000, the largest peace-keeping operation in UN history – have been able to contain the conflict within the borders of the former Yugoslavia. For the first time in history we have been able to deploy a preventive force, in Macedonia, which again has been able to prevent the conflict from spilling over into the borders of Macedonia. So the United Nations has done a lot of good work in the former Yugoslavia. And I believe, and so does the Secretary-General, that it is thanks to the good work of the United Nations that the parties have been able finally to reach the accords they did recently, which they signed in Paris recently, and which we hope will lead to peace in that troubled area of the world.

Now, Bosnia was a lesson for us all. It was a lesson in that the United Nations doesn't have the capacity to undergo enforcement operations. We can't go in under Chapter VII unless we are given the resources to fulfil that mandate. And the Secretary-General has said it time and time again: If you want us to perform certain operations, give us the resources to do so; otherwise, don't blame the United Nations if the operation goes wrong.

LITTLEJOHNS: You didn't mention Rwanda and Somalia.

FAWZI: I haven't mentioned them yet. You're –

LITTLEJOHNS: We're almost out of time, so –

FAWZI: Are we almost – ? Well, let me get Angola in. Angola is also inching cautiously along on the road to democracy. The Lusaka Accords are being implemented to a certain degree. Rwanda – well, we are phasing ourselves out of Rwanda. Let's not forget Somalia, which we pulled out of in March. We're learning lessons, and we're learning hard lessons. We started the year with 17 operations; we now have 16 operations. The budget for peace-keeping this year will be in the neighbourhood of $3 billion US. The total troop strength when we started was 69,000 from 77 countries; at the end of the year I would say around 50,000 from 80 countries.

LITTLEJOHNS: Mr. Fawzi, that's all the time we have. Thank you for being with us on this edition of **World Chronicle**. Our guest has been Ahmad Fawzi, Spokesman for the United Nations Secretary-General. I'm Michael Littlejohns. Thank you for joining us. We invite you to be with us for the next edition of **World Chronicle**.

* * * * *

Transcripts of the programme may be obtained free of charge by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: **World Chronicle**, United Nations, Room S-827, New York, New York, 10017, USA.

World Chronicle is broadcast worldwide and features guests whose work is concerned with major global issues. This programme is a public affairs presentation of this station from United Nations Radio and Television.

Additional information material about the United Nations can be obtained by writing to the Public Inquiries Unit, United Nations, Room GA-57, New York, New York, 10017, USA, or the UN Information Centre in your country.